

12/24/72

Dear Jim and Ray,

Lil and I both appreciate your card and the enclosed check. In the mail with it were two somewhat touching and expensive cards from John Ray and Walter Rife, both selected to emphasize friendship and appreciation of it. Lil understands the coding on the cards and say they are both 75-centers, a not inconsiderable sum for men who smoke and are dependant upon their scanty earnings as prisoners. In John's case he has had no earnings for the two months he was in the hole.

We appreciate both the thought and the help it means for us. Both are less common than you might think.

There were also two letters from James, including references to civil suits I think we should, when you can, discuss more than we have. I think he will accept any counsel we recommend. He is aware of the problems in that area. He refers to his conversation with you about collecting from Foreman and to a Memphis lawyer who has been willing to buck the powers there. As a general principle, I like that. He names "Slater", which I take to be how I might type "Slater", Hollis, of Memphis State. And he says the statute runs in a year, or April 4, 1973.

Larry has sent me some but not all Chicago clippings on Dorothy Hunt's death. For some reason, there seems to have been just about no reporting until 12/12, although there was radio treatment earlier. I asked Larry to send me two of each and he did. I have sent one to a reporter friend in California. He has fed back some rather interesting parallels and thoughts. I have these in a separate file if you ever want copies. I also have my own notes in that file.

If Jerry comes up with the transcript of the Warren show, I'd appreciate an extra copy for this reporter friend. As I believe I told you, my "expensive" tape jammed toward the end. I had a second machine working at that point, to get his Commission comment, so I may have all of it, but awkwardly.

We have heard nothing from Mary and are a bit concerned about it. I was reminded ~~it~~ of her stypical silence yesterday when Lil decorated-out (living) tree. She saved Mary's last years card, in the shape of a golden angel, and has it on the tree. Mary has been under an enormous burden and faced a series of crises that, even with her extensive experience with them, might be an overload. If you have any recent word, we'd like to know what it is.

At Ian McDonald's Xmas party last night I had a long talk with his bureau chief. Ian has discussed the petition with him. I didn't know it until last night, but Ian has a contract for a book with a British publisher. He is taking the coming week off to work on it. Fred says he'll read the petition in Ian's absence. He seems interested in the thing that BBC was interested in, that the British court and government would surrender all its records in any case, particularly one like this. BBC is not easily reached, but in this instance I have no doubt they were. I cite this as a measure of what is involved. We may be talking about it further in the near future. At this point I think a story along those lines, even if it is all in Frame-Up, might do more good. It does not foreclose a second story. And I have a few letters for him I didn't use in Frame-Up. (If by now I can find them!)

If you and Ray have any time over the holidays, perhaps you can drive up? If we know when it would be, maybe Lil can bake an extra loaf of bread. She has been producing good, old-fashioned bread, no two the same, for several months, to the detriment of my waistline. She'll have to stop the first of the year. The first couple of weeks of the tax season generally are not busy ones. After that is when she gets loaded up.

We expect Howard some time after 1/1. He'll let me know when. If you have never had a chance to talk to him, you might want to. An exceptional young man. We have grown quite fond of him. He is a history major, is taking graduate courses in his junior year, and as of last report, with all the extra work he is doing, was maintaining the required scholarship average. He has all my old VN files and early "instant analyses". They go way back. (I also once planned a book, "Aesop in the State Department.") He may do a thesis on CIA foundations. I have offered him all my stuff when I suggested this to him. If he doesn't do a thesis, maybe we'll do a book together. So, if and when Jerry comes up with the index and Howard gets time, there is much Jerry didn't have than can be integrated. Thanks again, and we hope you have a good year ahead.